

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 ACDA-07 OMB-01

TRSE-00 DHA-02 SCA-01 OPR-02 /110 W

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P 261413Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4993

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SANA PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4544

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PBOR, ET, SO

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS HEAVY FIGHTING IN OGADEN

REF: ADDIS ABABA 4535

SUMMARY: ETHIOPIAN PRESS HAS NOW PULLED OUT ALL STOPS AND IS GIVING MASSIVE COVERAGE TO FIGHTING IN OGADEN AND TO WHAT IS NOW OPENLY REFERRED TO AS AGGRESSION OR INVASION WHICH GSDR IS CARRYING OUT IN ETHIOPIA. NUMEROUS ARTICLES GIVE DETAILS OF AIRCRAFT REPORTED SHOT DOWN ON BOTH SIDES, CONFIDENTIAL

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AS WELL AS LOSSES OF SOMALI ARMOR AND PERSONNEL. OFFICIAL ETHIOPIAN COMMUNIQUE CHARGES THAT EGYPTIAN AND IRAQI PILOTS ARE FIGHTING ON SOMALI SIDE. ARTICLES ACKNOWLEDGE THAT SOMALIA HAS GAINED "TEMPORARY ADVANTAGE" THROUGH SEIZURE OF SOME BORDER TERRITORY AND "FALL OF CERTAIN TOWNS," AND APPEAL TO CITIZENRY FOR ALL-OUT CIVILIAN DEFENSE EFFORT. END SUMMARY.

1. FIRST COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY NEWLY-FORMED ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY OPERATIONS COMMAND (ADDIS ABABA 4505 NOTAL) ANNOUNCED JULY 25 THAT ETHIOPIAN REGULAR AND MILITIA FORCES WERE ENGAGED IN HEAVY FIGHTING WITH REGULAR SOMALI FORCES. COMMUNIQUE CLAIMED THAT ETHIOPIAN AIR FORCE HAS SHOT DOWN FOUR SOMALI MIG-21 AND ONE MIG-17 FIGHTER PLANES AND DESTROYED 30 TANKS AND ARMORED CARS. GROUND FORCES REPORTED TO HAVE DESTROYED NINE ARMORED CARS AND CAPTURED ONE, WITH NUMEROUS ADDITIONAL TANKS, ARMORED CARS, AND LARGE NUMBERS OF SOMALI TROOPS DESTROYED IN FIGHTING JULY 24 AND 25. ETHIOPIAN LOSSES, THOUGH ADMITTED, ARE UNSPECIFIED, WITH EXCEPTION OF C-47 AIRFORCE TRANSPORT PLANE, REPORTED SHOT DOWN BY SOMALI FIGHTER PLANES, AND ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES (EAL) DC-3 CONTAINING WOMEN AND CHILDREN PASSENGERS, BROUGHT DOWN BY GROUND FIRE.

2. COMMUNIQUE ALSO CLAIMED THAT IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT EGYPTIAN AND IRAQI PILOTS HAD TAKEN PART IN AIR FIGHT SUPPORTING SOMALIA, AND THAT UNIDENTIFIED "SEA-BORNE FOREIGN FORCE" HAD ARRIVED IN SOMALIA TO SUPPORT ARMED FORCES AND TO "MAINTAIN INTERNAL SECURITY." ACKNOWLEDGING THAT ENEMIES MAY HAVE GAINED TEMPORARY ADVANTAGE THROUGH CAPTURE OF SOME BORDER TERRITORY AND "FALL OF CERTAIN TOWNS," SEVERAL ARTICLES NOTED THAT, CONFIDENTIAL

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IN CONTRAST TO SOMALIA'S HOPE FOR QUICK VICTORY, ETHIOPIA MUST EXPECT PROTRACTED WAR, DEMANDING MAXIMUM EFFORT AND SACRIFICE ON PART ALL PATRIOTIC CITIZENS.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE OF AT LEAST PART OF ABOVE INFORMATION FROM EAL SOURCES, WHO SAID ETHIOPIAN DC-3 WAS DOWNED JULY 24 AT KABRADAHARE. WHEN TWO SOMALI MIG-21'S CAME IN TO STRAFE WRECKAGE, THEY WERE INTERCEPTED BY ETHIOPIAN F-5'S AND SHOT DOWN. CONVERSING WITH EMBOFF, KNOWLEDGEABLE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL HAD NOTHING BUT PRAISE FOR AMERICAN-MADE F-5'S, WHICH HE SAID HAD PUT SOME 120 SOMALI TRUCKS OUT OF ACTION. HE ALSO SAID THAT ONE SUDANESE AND TWO IRAQIS WERE AMONG DEAD ON BATTLEFIELD, AND "ARAB" MEDICAL PERSONNEL ARMED WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS WERE AMONG CAPTURED. TIENKEN

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